

110TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 1521

Honoring organizers for promoting equality.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 29, 2008

Mr. GUTIERREZ (for himself, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Mr. CLAY, Mr. MEEKS of New York, Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, Mr. HINOJOSA, Ms. NORTON, Mr. WATT, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, Ms. WOOLSEY, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, and Mr. KUCINICH) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

RESOLUTION

Honoring organizers for promoting equality.

Whereas the United States was founded on the notion that political power in a democracy derives from the expressed will of the people;

Whereas our great country believes that its citizens must be able to organize themselves, petition their government, and work together to improve their lives and their communities;

Whereas community organizing is a proud American tradition that helps Americans engage in the political process and make a difference in their communities and in the lives of their neighbors;

Whereas the values that community organizers represent are among the truest of American values, the values of our people;

Whereas whether working in small towns, rural areas, or big cities, community organizers recognize that citizens are all interconnected and that each citizen plays an important role in making our country work;

Whereas community organizers place their country first by strengthening the democratic principle of public participation;

Whereas the accomplishments of community organizers constitute an illustrious list, from helping slaves reach freedom, to gaining rights for farming families, to raising money to fight disease, to the civil rights movement's success changing the way we understand race and dismantling legal discrimination, to the women's movements that earned women the right to vote and the opportunity to break glass ceilings in all parts of society;

Whereas community organizer Jane Addams helped organize the Women's Peace Party and the International Congress of Women in an effort to avert World War I, and was the first American woman to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize;

Whereas abolitionist, women's suffragist and community organizer Susan B. Anthony cofounded the National Women's Suffrage Association, traveled the United States giving speeches in support of equal rights for women, was instrumental in laying the groundwork for the passage of the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution giving women the right to vote, and was honored as the

first American woman on a circulating United States coin;

Whereas teacher, nurse, and community organizer Clara Barton established an agency to obtain and distribute supplies to wounded soldiers during the American Civil War, convinced the Union Army to allow her to bring her own medical supplies to the battlefields, and organized the American Red Cross;

Whereas labor leader and community organizer Cesar Chavez cofounded the National Farm Workers Association, worked tirelessly to register new immigrants to vote, led boycotts and protests that resulted in higher wages and better working conditions for American farm laborers, and received the Pacem in Terris award from the Roman Catholic Church, and in 1994 was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom;

Whereas founding father and inventor Benjamin Franklin helped organize common citizens to create one of the first volunteer firefighting companies in America, obtained a charter from the Pennsylvania legislature to establish Pennsylvania Hospital, the first hospital in what was to become the United States, organized the Pennsylvania Militia, led the “anti-proprietary party” in the struggle against the Penn family, the proprietors of the colony, and was an active abolitionist, serving as president of the Pennsylvania Abolition Society;

Whereas Baptist minister and community organizer Martin Luther King, Jr. led the Montgomery Bus Boycott, helped found the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, was instrumental in organizing the 1963 March on Washington, became the youngest person to receive the Nobel Peace Prize, and was posthumously awarded

the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1977 and the Congressional Gold Medal in 2004;

Whereas native Tlingit Alaskan and community organizer Elizabeth W. Peratrovich worked tirelessly for the equal rights of indigenous Alaskan peoples and was the single driving force behind the passage of the State’s Anti-Discrimination Act of 1945, the first anti-discrimination law in the United States;

Whereas escaped slave, nurse, Union spy, and community organizer Harriet Tubman made more than 15 missions to rescue hundreds of slaves using the network of anti-slavery activists and safe houses known as the Underground Railroad; and

Whereas as Thomas Jefferson wrote, “Enlighten the people, generally, and tyranny and oppressions of body and mind will vanish like spirits at the dawn of day”: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That—

2 (1) the House of Representatives—

3 (A) honors the contributions that commu-
4 nity organizers, past and present, have made to
5 our Nation and our communities; and

6 (B) recognizes that community organizing
7 is a vision of participatory democracy in which
8 a change comes from the people, not the power-
9 ful, the privileged, or the government, and
10 where the electorate is empowered and called
11 upon to act on their behalf; and

1 (2) it is the sense of the House of Representa-
2 tives that—

3 (A) participation in community organizing
4 is an American tradition that should be encour-
5 aged; and

6 (B) regardless of religion, gender, race,
7 ethnicity, sexual preference, or point of view,
8 the right of American citizens to organize and
9 petition their government is crucial to achieving
10 a profoundly democratic, just, moral, and hon-
11 orable society.

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